



## AUDIT AT A GLANCE

# Language Access Services at the Public Advocate's Office

### What questions did the audit look at?

- ▶ Is the New York City Public Advocate's Office (PAO) providing adequate language access services to the Non-English Language Preference (NELP) population?
- ▶ Do those services meet the needs of the NELP population?

### Why does it matter for New Yorkers?

Nearly one-half of all New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home, and almost 25% of City residents over the age of five are not proficient in English. For these NELP residents, interacting with City government and gaining access to services can be a challenge.

The City has enacted a series of laws intended to strengthen its language access, allowing agencies to reach a greater number of New Yorkers and opening doors that might have otherwise remained closed. This audit—which is focused on the Public Advocate's Office—is one of a series that our office initiated to assess the language access services provided by New York City government.

The audit found that PAO generally complies with translation standards established in the City's various laws and guidelines and that language access services generally meet the needs of New Yorkers.

However, PAO did not fully comply with certain aspects of Local Law 30. Specifically, PAO's website did not indicate whether the agency provides free language access services, did not allow for agency documents to be translated into the City's top 10 NELP languages, and did not list the name and title of its Language Access Coordinator. Also, PAO did not have a compliant Language Access Implementation Plan (LAIP), as required.

### What changes did the agency commit to make following the audit?

- ▶ PAO agreed to post a compliant LAIP on its website, ensure the name and title of its Language Access Coordinator was public, and offer annual language access training for staff.
- ▶ PAO agreed to periodically test its website translation features.

## AUDIT FINDINGS



PAO provides adequate language access services to NELP clients.



PAO did not fully comply with aspects of Local Law 30 related to its website.



PAO did not have a compliant Language Access Implementation Plan.



Audit Recommendations	Agency Response
1 Periodically test website features to ensure that they are functioning as intended.	<b>AGREED</b>
2 Going forward, ensure all frontline and managerial staff receive annual training regarding language access services as required by LL30, and maintain documentation (e.g., attendance sheets, training material) of training provided.	<b>AGREED</b>
3 Continue to publish reports directly on the PAO website so that the translation feature can be used to translate reports in their entirety. If this option is not feasible, include a notice on the website informing constituents that published reports can be translated upon request.	<b>AGREED</b>
4 Ensure that the newly created Language Access Implementation Plan is posted in a conspicuous location on its website.	<b>AGREED</b>
5 Continue to ensure that the name and title of the agency's Language Access Coordinator is posted on its website as required.	<b>AGREED</b>



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